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NEW EPA NATIONAL INITIATIVE PROMOTES REUSE, ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION IN SUPERFUND, OTHER WASTE CLEANUP PROGRAMS

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Accelerating its efforts to revitalize communities and stimulate the economy by restoring contaminated properties, EPA today announced a new national initiative to incorporate land reuse into its Superfund, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Brownfields, and Underground Storage Tank hazardous waste cleanup programs.

The "Land Revitalization Agenda" was announced by EPA Administrator Christie Whitman at the Harbor Point site (formerly AlliedSignal), a 27-acre peninsula in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The site was successfully cleaned up in Feb. 2000 under RCRA's Corrective Action Program. Plans for Harbor Point redevelopment call for 1.8 million square feet of mixed-used space, representing up to \$400 million in new investment and creating as many as 5,000 jobs.

The national Agenda outlines 60 items that EPA can use to integrate land reuse into its cleanup programs throughout the country. Examples of these include: (1) EPA review of policies and practices concerning liability issues to promote, where appropriate, revitalization of properties, (2) EPA leveraging grant resources across multiple federal cleanup programs to facilitate area-wide cleanup and reuse of multiple contaminated properties, and (3) EPA piloting the use of written determinations stating that once-contaminated properties are ready for appropriate reuses.

"President Bush and the Congress are working together to strengthen our federal commitment to cleanup Brownfields and it's working," Whitman said. "But cleanup, in and of itself, is not enough. To get the most benefit from these programs, we have to help communities take the next step -- making good use of the now-clean land. That is why today's announcement of our new Land Revitalization Agenda today is so important. This is a comprehensive plan to build the partnerships needed to unleash the energy and commitment of America's communities in revitalizing its once-polluted sites. Through this program we will work with community and business leaders, entrepreneurs and visionaries to make dreams become realities."

Also attending the celebration was Maryland Governor Robert Ehrlich, who added: "Brownfields cleanup is critically important from both an environmental and economic development standpoint. It is an indispensable tool in the revitalization of urban communities. Administrator Whitman's Land Revitalization Agenda will help ensure that the ultimate goal of Brownfields cleanup - redevelopment - is achieved once environmental remediation has occurred."

Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley said: "Sites like Harbor Point have vast potential to expand jobs, and boost the surrounding neighborhoods. I am pleased that the EPA has devised and is now implementing the Land Revitalization Agenda to help remove one of the last hurdles to redevelopment - the fear of contamination and the liability associated with the cleanup."

EPA, U.S. Department of Justice and Maryland Department of Environmental Protection officials negotiated a RCRA Consent Decree with AlliedSignal to clean up the chromium-contaminated site, which resulted from 140 years of chemical manufacturing. AlliedSignal, now Honeywell, acquired the property in 1954 and facility operations resulted in significant amounts of chromium, a carcinogen, being discharged into the harbor. The subsequent chromium cleanup and closure project cost over \$100 million.

To facilitate redevelopment, EPA has negotiated a Prospective Lessee Agreement (PLA), subject to public comment, to resolve potential environmental liability. The redevelopment master plan also calls for a major public park and promenade. EPA's Mid-Atlantic Region's Smart Growth Memorandum of Agreement helped bring about the PLA.

M.J. Brodie, President of Baltimore Development Corporation, said: "Harbor Point is a world class site for mixed use development. Harbor Point has had one major problem - the vestiges of past industrial operations - and now that problem has been essentially eliminated."

"Our Baltimore Inner Harbor project has succeeded because of the strong partnership we have had with EPA, the state of Maryland and the city of Baltimore. All of us have supported a shared vision of cleanup and future development that will provide new economic and recreational opportunities for the citizens of Baltimore," added Ted Fischer, Honeywell's Vice President, Health, Safety, Environment and Remediation.

Reuse has occurred at 300 former Superfund sites. In the 1990s, EPA launched Corrective Action reforms aimed at accelerating cleanups at industrial sites. (Under RCRA Corrective Action, cleanups are required for all waste leaking into the environment from any source at a hazardous waste facility.) As a result, EPA and the states now have brought hundreds of RCRA facilities under control. Nearly 40 percent of these sites have either completed or made significant progress in their cleanups.

Learn more about the Land Revitalization Agenda at: <http://www.epa.gov/oswer/landrevitalization>